

URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes of June 25, 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jane Harris, Chairperson
Jeremy Clark
Anthony Moran

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jackie Ceberek
Chris Holden
Ken Ahnell

ALSO PRESENT

James Sipperly, Staff
Dana Whitney, City Arborist/Forester
Rakesh Salwan
Robert Merriam

1. Roll Call

Jane Harris, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 4:34pm in the conference room at the Water and Sewer Department Headquarters at 82 Berlin Street. Jane Harris welcomed new member Anthony Moran. The Commission members present introduced themselves to Anthony and welcomed him aboard. Anthony mentioned that he is a recent graduate of Middletown High School. He also reported that he will be attending Middlesex Community College in the fall. Anthony also mentioned that he was approached by Lisa Santangelo to join the Commission.

The roll was called and a quorum was not determined.

2. Review of Minutes of March 26, 2015

Due to the lack of a quorum, the Chairperson recommended that the minutes be deferred to the next meeting.

3. Old Business

(1) 2015 Work Plan

(a) Tree Nursery Update

Jane Harris reported that Keith Shortsleeve from NRG had volunteers show up to work but not as many as they planned due to a storm and volunteers had to stay at the plant to work. They did a great job as always working on taking down the old fence and weeding around the new fencing.

Jane would like to send Keith a thank you note for the volunteers that participated.

(b) Tree Disaster Plan

Jim reported that he saw George Dunn and he will schedule a time to meet with him within the next few weeks and include Dana, as well.

(2) UFC Budget

Jim reported that there is a small amount of money left on accounts with Ace Hardware and

Agway. Jane will make some recommendations to staff on possible supplies. Jim also requested that Dana send in any outstanding invoices prior to July. After July 1st, the new budget will come into effect.

(3) Tree Warden Report

Bill Russo, Tree Warden was not in attendance. Discussion ensued regarding the tree issues with Farm Hill School. Discussion then led to actions of a Tree Warden, which led to the qualifications of a Tree Warden, given the urgent change in the State Statutes.

The new statute requires that Tree Wardens and Deputy Tree Wardens have to complete an established tree course curriculum and pass a test satisfactory, as well. Discussion further ensued regarding legal issues if these requirements are not met.

(4) Public Works Report

Bill Russo, Public Works Director was not in attendance. Dana Whitney obtained the new Middletown Tree bid list dated May 13, 2015. A total of 51 trees were planted with an X for removal and posted accordingly.

(5) Middletown Garden Club Centennial Celebration 2015

Jane thanked Jim and Dana for their participation in this project. Jane reported that the project is completed and some trees have died as a result of lack of water and will be replaced.

(6) Arboretum gas line installation caused damage to yellow Birch Tree – Wesleyan University.

Jim reported that this will remain on the agenda until Wesleyan completes a planting to compensate for ultimate tree loss due to the construction.

(7) Open Space Forestry Management

Jeremy reported that a meeting was cancelled last night that was to discuss the open space timber harvesting. Jane recommended that we contact John Morris, from the Conservative Commission regarding this item on our agenda.

(8) Tree Ordinance

Jim and Jane met with Joe Samolis and the Mayor regarding the Tree Ordinance. A small modification was requested by the Mayor and Jane will get them a revised draft for Council approval.

(9) Bob Merriam

Bob Merriam, a resident and owner of Merriam Tree Farm donated five Japanese fir trees. He was in attendance because he is interested in what this Commission does and is willing to volunteer on projects. He will be attending a meeting of the Parkland's Committee at Wadsworth Mansion to plant some of the trees there.

(10) Rakesh Salwan

Rakesh finished another tree planting project in Guilford with the assistance of the UFC. He was present to thank the Commission and talk about future projects.

Trees of Honor site was discussed. Dana reported that many trees have died because the roots are too wet. Jim reported that he also looked at the soil conditions and concluded that the clay in the soil is preventing water from draining.

Meeting adjourned at 5:35p.m.